

# Todd addresses UK diversity

By The Associated Press

University of Kentucky President Lee Todd met with a group of state lawmakers Wednesday and said he apologized to the predominantly black group for comments made by school officials implying that black students could not survive academically at UK.

Todd said after a private meeting with six legislators in the Capitol Annex that he was able to correct what he called a "misimpression." Todd also said he outlined a major minority recruitment effort at the university that includes eight new jobs.

"I had obviously left the impression that African-American students cannot compete if they come to the University of

Kentucky," Todd said. "That was not the impression we wanted to leave. Clearly, African-American students can be successful at UK."

The meeting was sparked by comments he and other UK administrators made over the last month about the 40 percent drop in black freshmen at UK this fall. Kentucky got 757 black applicants, admitted 360, but enrolled only 151.

School officials said this came after back-to-back years in which UK's black freshman enrollment grew by 30 percent and 20 percent.

Kentucky administrators said this year's decline was because of an increasingly selective pool of applicants in which numerous blacks had borderline scores or

below on the ACT entrance exam.

Kentucky uses a correlation of high school grade-point average and ACT score to determine whether an applicant is likely to succeed and thus should be admitted.

"We're very committed to recruiting faculty, students and staff of a diverse nature," Todd said.

State Sen. Gerald Neal, D-Louisville, called the meeting "relatively productive." Neal said UK will have to demonstrate that it will increase its black enrollment.

"There can't be any equivocation," he said.

State Rep. Darryl Owens, D-Louisville, wrote a Sept. 19 letter of complaint

to Todd precipitated Wednesday's meeting.

Todd said he also will create a Committee on Research and Analysis on the Success of African-American Students at UK; he will have "listening sessions" with faculty, staff, students and the community; and the Multicultural Affairs Web site will be upgraded.

In an e-mail to all UK faculty, students and staff last week, Todd said the university is "not doing enough to employ more African-Americans in top- and mid-level management."

Todd accepted blame for the problems.

"Ultimately, as the leader of this institution, I am responsible," he said.